

**Case 3499*****Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827 and *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1832 (Aves): proposed conservation by suppression of the generic name *Creadion* Vieillot, 1816**

Walter J. Bock

*Department of Biological Sciences, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, U.S.A. (e-mail: wb4@columbia.edu)*

Richard Schodde

*Australian Biological Resources Study, GPO Box 787, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601, Australia (e-mail: richard.schodde@environment.gov.au)*

Ricardo L. Palma

*Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand (e-mail: RicardoP@tepapa.govt.nz)*

**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, is to conserve the generic names *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827 and *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1832 for Australian wattlebirds (MELIPHAGIDAE) and the New Zealand saddleback (CALLAEIDAE) by suppression of the generic name *Creadion* Vieillot, 1816. Suppression of the name *Creadion* is sought because, although used for the New Zealand saddleback up to the mid 20th century, it may instead be applied to the Australian wattlebirds, long known as *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827. *Creadion* is therefore a source of confusion and threatens stability.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; CALLAEIDAE; MELIPHAGIDAE; *Creadion*; *Anthochaera*; *Philesturnus*; saddleback; wattlebirds; Australasia.

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1. Vieillot (1816, p. 84) introduced the genus *Creadion* for Australasian passerine birds with wattled bills. He diagnosed it briefly, and included in it three nominal species without designating any as type. They were ‘*Sturnus carunculatus*’, ‘*Merops carunculatus*’ and ‘*Corvus paradoxus*, Lath.’ (= Latham). *Sturnus carunculatus* is the New Zealand saddleback, currently known as *Philesturnus carunculatus* (Gmelin, 1789) in the family CALLAEIDAE. *Merops carunculatus* and *Corvus paradoxus* Latham are the Australian mainland red and Tasmanian yellow wattlebirds, respectively known as *Anthochaera carunculata* (Shaw, 1790) and *A. paradoxus* (Daudin, 1800) in the family MELIPHAGIDAE. Vieillot’s attribution of *Corvus paradoxus* to Latham was an error, as Latham, in his only use of the name (1801, p. xxvi), correctly quoted Daudin as its author.

2. Vieillot (1817, pp. 390–391) then placed *Sturnus carunculatus* in one unnamed section of *Creadion*, and *Merops carunculatus* and *Corvus paradoxus* together in another; later he had the last species figured alone as an example of the genus, under

the misapplied species name 'le Créadion à pendeloques, *Creadion carunculatus*' (Vieillot & Oudart, 1823, pl. 94). No steps were taken, however, to designate a type species as required by Article 67.5 of the Code. Next to become embroiled in the issue were Vigors & Horsfield (1827) in their landmark review of Australian birds in the collections of the Linnean Society of London. They referred both *Merops carunculatus* and *Corvus paradoxus*, together with other Australian meliphagids, to their new genus *Anthochaera* (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827, pp. 320–321). *Anthochaera* was described there in detail, with the summary comment (p. 321): 'M. Vieillot has referred (these birds) to a new genus of his, which he names *Creadion*, and which he divides into two sections; one represented by the *Sturnus carunculatus*, Gmel., the other by the bird(s) before us. He places this genus in the vicinity of the STURNIDAE. . . . As we consider our present group to have no relation to the STURNIDAE beyond . . . carunculated appendages to the head, we have no hesitation in removing it from the genus *Creadion*; leaving the *Sturnus carunculatus* (with which species . . . we are unacquainted) to represent that group'.

3. This statement was accepted by Amadon (1962, p. 158) as a subsequent designation of *Sturnus carunculatus* Gmelin (New Zealand saddleback) as the type species of *Creadion*. Yet Vigors & Horsfield's (1827, p. 321) use of the verb 'represent' does not appear to qualify as an equivalent designatory term, as required by Article 69.1.1 of the Code. Here we have taken our cue from Article 67.5 of the Code, which requires that the fixation of type species 'be rigidly construed'. In their discussion of *Anthochaera* and *Creadion*, Vigors & Horsfield (1827) were concerned with species relationships, not about fixing genera nomenclaturally by type species designation. Thus their use of the word 'represent' when referring *Sturnus carunculatus* to *Creadion* is in the context of a taxonomic example. As such, it would not qualify as a type species designation under Article 67.5.1 of the Code. Instead, Vigors & Horsfield's action appears to constitute 'fixation by elimination' which is also excluded as a type species designation by Article 69.4 of the Code. Neither Amadon (1962) nor Wolters (1980, p. 448) were aware of the ruling on 'fixation by elimination' because it did not come into effect until 1985, in the third edition of the Code (1985, Article 69 (b)).

4. The next, and clearly valid, type species designation for *Creadion* was not of *Sturnus carunculatus* Gmelin, but of a different originally included nominal species. Lesson (1837, p. 7) said of *Creadion*: 'Le type de ce genre, et sans contredit la seule espèce qu'on doive y admettre, est le créadion à pendeloques<sup>3</sup>, qui habite la terre de Diemen. . .' ['The type of this genus, and without contradiction the only species that we must admit to it, is the *Creadion* with pendeloques, which inhabits van Dieman's Land. . .']. The superscript 3 refers to a footnote which lists the following synonyms, in order: 'Pie à pendeloques, Daudin, t. 11, pl. 16; *creadion carunculatus*, Vieill., Gal., pl. 94; *merops carunculatus*, Lath.; *corvus paradoxus*, ib.; Shaw, White, p. 144 et 240; *anthochaera carunculata*, Horsf. & Vig.'. Although the synonymy is partly confounded by references to other species, the type species explicitly and implicitly named in Lesson's text is 'Le Créadion à pendeloques, *Creadion carunculatus*' of Vieillot (1823, p. 142, pl. 94 – see paragraph 2 above), together with its senior synonym, the Tasmanian 'Pie à pendeloques, *Corvus paradoxus*' of Daudin (1800, p. 246, pl. 16). This senior available binomen was cited in Lesson's synonymy. *Creadion* Vieillot, 1816 thereby becomes applicable to the Australian wattlebirds and senior to *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827.

5. Drawing attention to Lesson's action, Mathews (1922, pp. 169–170) was the first to conclude that the type species of *Creadion* Vieillot was *Corvus paradoxus* Daudin. He then (Mathews 1925a, pp. 75–76) went on to determine that *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1832, was the earliest – and valid – generic name for the New Zealand saddleback. Its type species is *Sturnus carunculatus* Gmelin, 1789 by monotypy. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1832, p. 390) had misassigned its authorship to Latham, but this is corrected here under Article 67.7 of the Code. The actual author is J.F. Gmelin (1789, p. 805): Latham had correctly attributed the name to Gmelin in his only use of it (Latham, 1790, p. 324).

6. 19th and early 20th century ornithology, nevertheless, followed Vigors & Horsfield's generic nomenclature. From Gould (1848, 1865), Buller (1873, 1882), Sharpe (1877) and Gadow (1884) into the first two decades of the 20th century, *Creadion* Vieillot was employed for the New Zealand saddleback and *Anthochaera* (or *Acanthochaera* [sic.]) Vigors & Horsfield for the Australian wattlebirds. After that, Mathews' (1922, 1925a) findings generated a divergence in usage. In New Zealand, *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire was taken up for the saddleback by both the *Checklist of New Zealand Birds* (OSNZ Checklist Committee, 1953) and Oliver (1955), and it has been employed there for this endangered New Zealand endemic ever since. For over 50 years now, *Philesturnus* has been used in all official New Zealand checklists (OSNZ Checklist Committee, 1970, 1990), handbooks (Westerkov, 1967; Robertson, 1985; Peter, 2006), atlases (Bull et al., 1985; Robertson et al., 2007), field guides (Falla et al., 1966, 1979; Heather & Robertson, 1997; Robertson & Heather, 1999), and manuals of extinct and threatened birds (Gill, 1991). Moreover, there have been over 80 separate uses of *Philesturnus* for the saddleback compared to 9 of *Creadion* in the primary ornithological journal of New Zealand, *Notornis*, since its commencement in 1943. All uses of *Creadion* in that journal are earlier than 1960 except for one in 1977 and another in 1988.

7. In Australia, by contrast, Mathews' findings affecting *Anthochaera* were ignored. To avoid continuous splitting and nomenclatural alterations, *The Official Checklist of the Birds of Australia*, 2nd edition (RAOU Checklist Committee, 1926) and all subsequent Australian checklists (Schodde, 1975; Christidis & Boles, 1994, 2008; Schodde & Mason, 1999) kept *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield for the Australian wattlebirds. Since the turn of the 20th century, the uses of *Anthochaera* for the Australian wattlebirds have run into the thousands. Two of its species are common urban birds in the capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide; two are of economic concern as pest species in orchards in southern Australia and Tasmania; and another, *Anthochaera phrygia* (Shaw, 1794), is gazetted by national and State governments as endangered. The name *Anthochaera* is used for these species throughout Australia today, in handbooks, atlases, field guides and conservation manuals. In the senior Australian ornithological journal, *The Emu*, the name has been used in over 500 separate papers between 1900 and 2000 alone. In comparison, *Creadion* Vieillot was employed for the Australian wattlebirds only by Mathews, and in just five of his later works for only one of the species (Mathews, 1924, 1925b, 1930, 1931, 1946).

8. Outside Australasia, *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield has remained in exclusive use for the Australian wattlebirds up to the present. It is employed for them in all

global manuals (Higgins et al., 2008) and checklists (Salomonsen, 1967; Gruson, 1976; Wolters, 1979; Howard & Moore, 1980, 1991; Sibley & Monroe, 1990, Monroe & Sibley, 1993; Wells, 1998; Dickinson, 2003; Clements, 2007). Outside New Zealand, *Creadion* Vieillot was reserved for the New Zealand saddleback for a much longer time, as in Gruson (1976), Howard & Moore (1980, 1991) and Sibley & Monroe (1990). Such usage followed 19th century tradition and Amadon's (1962, p. 158) interpretation in the respected and influential *Check-list of Birds of the World* begun by J.L. Peters at Harvard – see paragraph 3 above. Yet there has been more than a little confusion, exemplified by Wolters' world checklist which used *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in the main text of that work (Wolters, 1977, p. 219) and then, without explanation, changed to *Creadion* Vieillot in an appendix of corrections (Wolters, 1980, p. 448). Since 1990, nevertheless, virtually all global manuals and checklists have, similar to those in New Zealand, turned to *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire for the saddleback (Monroe & Sibley, 1993; Wells, 1998; Dickinson, 2003; Clements, 2007).

9. As usage stands today, *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield remains in universal use for the Australian wattlebirds, *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire has come into prevailing use globally as well as provincially for the New Zealand saddleback, and *Creadion* Vieillot is falling into disuse. Because of the differing interpretations to which the type species of *Creadion* has been and may be subject, that name has become a source of confusion (Bock 1994, p. 220). It has potential to generate serious ongoing instability, particularly if transferred from the New Zealand saddleback (CALLAEIDAE) to the Australian wattlebirds (MELIPHAGIDAE). The Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature of the International Ornithological Committee reviewed the matter in 2002 and concluded unanimously that the simplest and most effective solution in the interest of stability was suppression of *Creadion*.

10. In this event, for *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield to be entered on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology, its type species needs to be clarified. Contrary to references in Gadow (1884, p. 262), the RAOU Checklist Committee (1926, p. 103) and Salomonsen (1967, p. 444), the first to designate one of the originally included nominal species as type species was G.R. Gray (1840, p. 15). He designated '*A. carunculata* (Lath.) V. & H.', which, in its original combination, is *Merops carunculatus* Latham, 1790. Latham's name was used as valid in the original description of *Anthochaera* (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827, p. 321), where, however, Vigors & Horsfield confounded its identity. Latham (1790, p. 276) had based *Merops carunculatus* exclusively on the 'Wattled Bee-eater' from Port Jackson, New South Wales, in Phillip's (1789) '*The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*', p. 164. Vigors & Horsfield (1827, footnote) nevertheless confined their own circumscription of *Merops carunculatus* Latham to material of *Corvus paradoxus* Daudin collected in Tasmania. Thus *Merops carunculatus* Latham in Vigors & Horsfield (1827, p. 321) is a misidentified nominal species. Gray (1840) expressly used Vigors & Horsfield's circumscription of *Merops carunculatus* in his designation of the type species of *Anthochaera*, as is evident from the full form of its specification: '*A. carunculatus* (Lath.) V. & H. Vieill. Gal. des Ois. Pl. 94'. '(Lath.) V. & H.' quotes Vigors & Horsfield's application of Latham's name, and 'Vieill. Gal. des Ois. Pl. 94' refers to plate 94 in *La Galerie des Oiseaux* (Vieillot & Oudart, 1823), which is also of the Tasmanian wattlebird – see paragraph 2 above. Gray's designation is thus a

deliberate use of a name in the sense of a previous misidentification as governed by Article 11.10 of the Code. Under Article 69.2.4 of the Code, the type species of *Anthochaera* then becomes *Corvus paradoxus* Daudin, 1800. It is the senior available and in-use epithet for the Tasmanian wattlebird, and also a nominal species included in the synonymy of *Merops carunculatus* Latham, 1790 in the original description of *Anthochaera* (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827). The designation of *Corvus paradoxus* Daudin as the type species of *Anthochaera* maintains the customary usage of this generic name in the family MELIPHAGIDAE.

11. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to suppress the generic name *Creadion* Vieillot, 1816 for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827 (gender: feminine), type species by subsequent designation by G.R. Gray (1840) *Corvus paradoxus* Daudin, 1800;
  - (b) *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1832 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy *Sturnus carunculatus* Gmelin, 1789;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *paradoxus* Daudin, 1800, as published in the binomen *Corvus paradoxus* (specific name of the type species of *Anthochaera* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827);
  - (b) *carunculatus* Gmelin, 1789, as published in the binomen *Sturnus carunculatus* (specific name of the type species of *Philesturnus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1832);
- (4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Creadion* Vieillot, 1816, as suppressed in (1) above.

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